

Forest Certification Work Instruction

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Work Instruction Title: 1.5 Social Impact Considerations and Public Involvement Processes**Work Area Group:** 1 – Plan, Monitor, and Review

Purpose: Outline the existing and new means by which social impacts are considered and public involvement processes occur for State Forest management.

Work Instruction:**1. Policy:****A.** NRC Policy 2207 regarding management of State Forests states the following:

- “The Department shall consider all the values of forest resources.”
- “The Department shall manage the total forest system under a management concept which will yield a combination of products, services and total values to meet the economic and environmental needs of present and future generations. All important products of forest resources – timber, fish and wildlife, minerals (including oil and gas), recreation, environmental, and aesthetic values – shall be given fair and equitable consideration.”

Such fair and equitable considerations will be a part of normal business at all DNR administrative levels from the Management Unit through the District level to the State level. This includes social impact considerations. Evidence of social considerations is to be a part of documents pertaining to everyday activities (e.g. inventory and treatment decisions) and special reports (e.g. Wildlife Conservation Strategy, Biodiversity Stewardship, and Ecoregional Plans).

B. NRC Policy 1005 (Public Involvement in Activities of the Department) assures social impact considerations through public involvement processes. The general policy begins with:

“Citizen participation and interest in the activities of the Department shall be encouraged in all possible ways. Attention to citizen questions, inquiries, complaints, and requests shall be considered a principal duty by employees at all levels.”

C. NRC Policy 1022 and the accompanying Procedure 1022.2 provides for the appointing of special task forces, study groups, and committees. These are to be

“...used on all possible occasions to develop proposals and recommendations on significant issues, problems and procedures facing the Department. The subject with which the group is to deal must be specific and clearly defined so that positive recommendations can be made. Time limitations and completion dates shall be carefully outlined. Membership must be limited to a workable size, and the time of a sizable number of people should not be unduly requested. All appointments are by the Director or Deputy Directors.”

The procedure for forming a Special Task Force, Study Group, or Committee by a Bureau Chief, Regional Director, Division or Office is spelled out in Procedure 1022.2

Recent examples of special task forces, study groups, and committees include the DNR Land Review Team, Commercial Use of State Land Work Group, ORV Work Group, the Wolf Management Work Group, and the Keweenaw Point Advisory Committee.

D. DNR Administrative Procedure 17.01.03 addresses DNR Employees' involvement with stakeholder and public working groups (ISSUED: 05/24/2005). It further reinforces the role of public involvement in stating:

- "The Department believes that citizen advisory committees and stakeholder working groups encourage citizen participation in government and are helpful to agencies in decision-making and in developing approaches to new and existing programs."

It requires:

- "When a Department of Natural Resources public work group (e.g., DNR Hunter Recruitment and Retention Work Group) includes a communication component (public meetings, brochures for the public, etc.), the Office of Communications must be notified or contacted."

In turn, the Office of Communications is required to

- inform the DNR Management Team of the formation of work groups that involve and engage stakeholders and other DNR constituencies.
- coordinate and/or plan a communications strategy, as necessary, with divisions/offices and DNR employees who participate in the work group.
- ensure that the Office of Communications maintains a database of current work groups and their members.

2. Forest Management Unit Level:

A. The Compartment Review (CR) process is open, public, advertised, and communicated through web postings and informational mailings. Both existing uses and possible future uses of the State Forest are evaluated through this process (OI manual, Chapter 7). Social impacts are considered through the evaluation of public comments as they relate to the compartment review process. Specific topics that are identified in the Compartment Review include:

- Management goals
- Ownership patterns, development, and land use in and around the compartment
- Archeological, Historical and Cultural features
- Special management designations or considerations
- Mineral resource and development concerns and/or restriction
- Vehicle access
- Recreational facilities and opportunities
- Wildlife and Fisheries management considerations

There are three formal opportunities to gather public comments during the compartment review process including: participation in the annual FMU open house, comments submitted via the FMU web page or directly to the FMU staff, and direct participation at the compartment review. Unsolicited comments can be submitted at any time prior to the compartment review and will be considered.

All written comments received will be presented at the compartment review and will be made part of the permanent record of the compartment. Minutes of the compartment review will include a summary of

justifications for changes to prescriptions, and will document consideration given to comments received from the public.

- B. Special interest and ad hoc meetings with the public are conducted as needed. Written records will be kept by the DNR lead contact.

3. EcoRegional/District Level:

- A. Social Criteria and Indicators (C & I) data will be developed and monitored as part of the ecoregional planning process (see Ecoregional Plan Development Work Instruction). While Ecoteams will incorporate additional C & I of local interest, a statewide core set will be identified, tracked, and reported on at the state level. Examples of C & I identified by the EUP Ecoteam include stability of land use, spiritual and aesthetic values, local and community economic health and trends, and the legal and institutional framework for ecosystem management. While many of these are the same as the longstanding list of categories incorporated in the Compartment Review Summaries, these are being developed through a public input and review process. The tracking and reporting of the C & I lend further structure to social (and biological) impact evaluation.
- B. Social values will also be considered through the public involvement processes in the development of ecoregional plans. This process will incorporate a minimum of two public meetings and an additional comment period during the time the plan is developed and before the final draft is submitted to the Statewide Council for approval. (See Ecoregional Plan Development Work Instruction).
- C. Social values and impacts will be considered as part of special projects which cross FMU boundaries. Recent examples include the Chocolay Snowmobile Trail, Keweenaw Point Management Plan, ORV and Snowmobile Plans, Mullet Lake to Cheboygan Trail... Both internal and external expertise will be secured to assist in such assessments. Meeting notes, correspondence, and recommendations of committees or groups affiliated with such projects will be retained by the designated DNR lead.

4. State or Division Level:

- A. Natural Resources Commission Policy 1005 includes the following direction:

1. A portion of each public meeting of the Commission shall be set aside for citizen appearance. All other commissions, boards, councils, and other advisory bodies associated with the Department shall do likewise.
2. Public hearings and meetings shall be held when increased input from the public is needed, as well as when legally required. These shall be held at times and places convenient to the public, adequate notice shall be given, and reasonable effort be made to provide the public with Information on the issue involved.
3. As time permits, employees shall attend and participate in both formal and informal meetings of organizations which have environmental and natural resource concerns.
4. Full cooperation shall be given to the Governor, Legislature and other governmental agencies in furthering the principle of public Involvement

- B. The DNR Forest Management Advisory Committee is being established to advise the Director of the DNR. The purpose of the Committee is to assist the DNR in balancing environmental, social and economic issues while carrying out the DNR's forest resource management responsibilities. The Committee will provide a mechanism whereby interested persons can play an advisory role in the formation of DNR priorities and practices. It will also:

- Identify potential long-term threats to forest resources in the State.
- Describe economic and environmental opportunities that are linked with forest resources.
- Address management problems, opportunities and challenges related to public and private forest ownership.
- Provide active participation in the DNR's forest resource planning activities, including forest certification efforts.
- Identify appropriate partnerships with other agencies that impact Michigan's resources.

Membership will include DNR staff, forest industry organization representation, university personnel, other government agency representation, conservation and environmental organizations, and other interested parties as determined by the DNR Director. This committee will also evaluate the need for additional social impact evaluations.

C. Many other statewide advisory committees exist, examples include:

- Snowmobile Advisory Committee,
- ORV Advisory Board,
- Recreational Trails Program Advisory Board,
- Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Council,
- Hunter Recruitment and Retention Work Group,
- Michigan State Parks Citizens' Committee

Scope: (All State Forest Land and Affected Divisions): ☒ State Forest Land ☒ Other: Michigan lands other than State-owned

☒ DNR – FMFM ☒ DNR – Wildlife ☒ DNR – Fish ☒ DNR – Law ☐ DNR – Parks

Responsibility and Role: (Staff who will implement or supervise this instruction)

Job Title/Division	Role
Stand Examiners	Consider social impacts of DNR operational activities and document in inventory databases, Compartment Review (CR) Summaries and Compartment Review meeting notes.
FMFM Inventory and Planning Specialists	Assure social impact considerations are documented in inventory databases, CR Summaries and CR meeting notes.
Regional Ecoteams and Ecoregional Planning Teams	Identify, track, review and report social C & I; consider and/or develop recommendations for operations based on social and other impacts. Include public meetings and input opportunities during ecoregional plan development. (The Ecoregional Planning Teams will conduct much of this work while the Regional Ecoteams oversee and review their work.)
Unit Managers, District Supervisors, program staff, Field Coordinators, Division Chiefs, Deputy Directors	Assure both social considerations and public involvement processes are incorporated and properly documented in recommendations and decisions; meet with natural resource-related organizations on matters of concern; propose special task groups or committees to address issues as needed and assist such groups as requested
DNR Forest Advisory Committee	Assists the DNR Director in balancing environmental, social and economic issues in carrying out the DNR's forest resource management responsibilities

Training/Skills: (Those required to accomplish work instruction)

Item:	Brief Description of Skill or Course	Exists/ New
Identification of Social Impacts	Ecoregional and FMU processes that identify, track, and report impacts (some old, some new)	<input type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N

References:

- NRC Policy 1005 – Public Involvement in Activities of Department
- NRC Policy 1006 – Department Position – Presentation at Hearings and Meetings
- NRC Policy 1022 and DNR Procedure 1022.2– Appointing Special Task Forces, Study Groups and Committees
- NRC Policy 2207 and related DNR Procedure 2207.7 – Management of State Forests
- Administrative Procedure 17.01.03 – DNR Employees’ Involvement with Stakeholder and Public Working Groups
- Draft Statewide Forest Planning Guidance Document, 5/3/05
- Part 525, Statewide Forest Resources Plan, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451
- FMU Analyses and Ecoregional Plan Development Work Instructions
- Implementing Public Educational Opportunities on State Forests Work Instruction

Monitoring:

- Reporting, monitoring, analyzing, and adapting management take place on an ongoing basis at all 3 levels-FMU, Ecoregion, and Statewide.

Records:

- C&I measurements and reports
 - Public comments
 - Public meeting notes and comments
 - Eco-team and SWC documented approvals
 - Maps and background documents
 - Analysis results
 - Draft and final plan documents
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